

Message Text

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TAGS: UR US CASC (SONTOWSKI, LILLIAN)(BRANITSKY, VIKTOR S.)

SUBJECT: US-SOVIET MARRIAGE: SONTOWSKI-BRANITSKY

1. FURTHER EVIDENCE OF SOVIET INTRANSIGENCE IN MARRIAGE AREA IS PROVIDED BY RECENT SOVIET ACTIONS DESIGNED TO FRUSTRATE MARRIAGE BETWEEN US CITIZEN LILLIAN SONTOWSKI AND SOVIET CITIZEN VIKTOR BRANITSKY OF KIEV.

2. SONTOWSKI AND BRANITSKY APPLIED FOR MARRIAGE LICENSE AT KIEV ZAGS OFFICE IN LATE JULY AND RECEIVED MARRIAGE DATE OF AUGUST 26. MISS SONTOWSKI, WHO IS ON INTOURIST TOUR, WAS SCHEDULED TO BE IN KIEV FROM AUGUST 24 TO 27. HOWEVER, ON AUGUST 24 KIEV ZAGS OFFICE RECEIVED SUPPOSEDLY ANONYMOUS LETTER STATING THAT VIKTOR BRANITSKY HAD BEEN MENTAL PATIENT IN VARIOUS KIEV PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS. (DEPT WILL RECALL THAT SUCH LETTERS HAVE SURFACED IN PAST MARRIAGE CASES, SUCH AS EPIC NEMEC-IGNASHEV CASE.) COUPLE COUNTERED ALLEGATION BY OBTAINING CERTIFICATE FROM HOSPITALS MENTIONED IN LETTER TO EFFECT THAT VIKTOR HAD NEVER BEEN HOSPITALIZED IN ANY OF THEM. EVEN THOUGH THIS APPEARED TO MEET ZAGS REQUIREMENT, ZAGS OFFICE PUT OFF MARRIAGE UNTIL AUGUST 31, AND INTOURIST REFUSED TO EXTEND SONTOWSKI ITINERARY IN KIEV. MISS SONTOWSKI ARRIVED MOSCOW EVENING OF AUGUST 27 ACCOMPANIED BY BRANITSKY.

3. COUPLE BELIEVES, AND CONSOFF INCLINED TO AGREE, THAT ZAGS AND INTOURIST ACTION REPRESENTS ALL TOO FAMILIAR DELIBERATE

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ATTEMPT TO FRUSTRATE US-SOVIET MARRAIGE PLANS. COUPLE HAS RUN

INTO FURTHER STONEWALL IN MOSCOW, AS INTOURIST REFUSES TO SELL MISS SONTOWSKI TICKET TO KIEV. IN ADDITION, WHEN COUPLE SPOKE TO KIEV ZAGS BY PHONE FROM MOSCOW AUGUST 28 IT APPARENT THAT ALLEGATION OF BRANITSKIY'S SUPPOSED MENTAL PROBLEMS NOT LAID TO REST AS COUPLE BELIEVED AND THAT AUGUST 31 MARRIAGE DATE MAY NOT BE FIRM.

4. EMBASSY HAS INTERCEDED REPEATEDLY AT HIGH LEVELS WITH INTOURIST AND HAS TRANSMITTED SUPPORTING NOTE TO MFA. HOWEVER, IN FAMILIAR STYLE, INTOURIST SEEMS TO BE WORKING DILIGENTLY TO DISCOVER IMPEDIMENTS RATHER THAN SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEM. REPRESENTATION TO MFA MAY HAVE LITTLE OR NO IMMEDIATE EFFECT. MISS SONTOWSKI'S SOVIET VISA EXPIRES ON SEPTEMBER 2 AND IT SEEMS UNLIKELY SOVIETS WILL ACT TO EXTEND IT. THUS APPEARS THAT, UNLESS SOVIET BUREAUCRATIC STONEWALL SHOULD SUDDENLY CRUMBLE, SONTOWSKI-BRANITSKY MARRIAGE ATTEMPT WILL LIKELY BE FRUSTRATED THIS TIME AND THAT MISS SONTOWSKI MAY LEAVE COUNTRY SEPT 2 WITH UNCERTAIN PROSPECT OF RECEIVING FUTURE SOVIET VISA.

5. COMMENT: COUPLE HAVE SO FAR SHOWN REMARKABLE SANG-FROID IN FACE OF MARRIAGE HASSLE AND SEEM INCLINED TO SEE MATTER THROUGH TO END. THEY HAVE NOT YET CONTACTED WESTERN PRESS ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS AND HAVE APPARENTLY NO PLANS TO DO SO IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. HOWEVER, AS DEPT AWARE, AS FRUSTRATIONS MOUNT THIS POSSIBILITY CANNOT BE EXCLUDED.

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